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Forest Research is an Agency of the Forestry Commission and is the leading UK organisation engaged in forestry and tree related research. The Agency aims to support and enhance forestry and its role in sustainable development by providing innovative, high-quality scientific research, technical support and consultancy services.

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Introduction to second edition

What has changed?

This is the second edition of **Involving People in Forestry: A toolbox** for public involvement in forest and woodland planning.

This second edition updates the toolbox to reflect the developments made in public engagement in forest and woodland management. These include more work with third sector organisations (charities, trusts and community groups), more urban forestry and more projects aiming to make forestry more relevant to the lives of more people.

What does the toolbox provide?

This resource provides:

- context and background information on public engagement;
- guidance for planning public engagement;
- tools and techniques to facilitate public engagement.

It also includes references to other sources of useful information. We explain more about how best to use this toolbox in the How to use this toolbox section (page 23).

Aims and objectives of the toolbox

This toolbox provides information and ideas to forest and woodland managers on ways to engage individuals, communities and organisations in the decision-making process, design and management of forestry projects and activities. This includes developing and maintaining equal access to the many public benefits forestry can provide for all members of society.

In particular, the toolbox aims to help forest and woodland managers to answer the following questions, which are relevant to all planning decisions or the implementation of activities:

- Who should be involved in decisions about the forest or woodland?
- When should they be involved?
- In what ways could they be involved?
- What is the best way to plan engagement?
- How can the success or impact of the public engagement be judged?

One size does not fit all

There is no single right way in which to involve people in forest and woodland planning decisions and projects. People and their needs vary from place to place and every forest – and what it can deliver – is unique. The toolbox helps users to identify:

- who to involve;
- which tools to use;
- when to use the tools;
- what resources will be required.

It should help to ensure that the right benefits are delivered to the right people.

What do we mean by engagement?

Levels of engagement

The terminology surrounding public involvement is far from settled, and the word 'engagement' is used here to summarise a range of possible contacts between people, especially environmental managers and those that have an interest (or 'stake') in their decisions. A person's level of engagement in a particular woodland planning process or project is likely to be determined by:

- what they may gain from the decision;
- what they may lose from the decision;
- the relative importance of the decision or project compared to other concerns in their life;
- the responsibility they have for the decision or for people affected by the decision.

The International Association for Public Participation has developed a 'Spectrum of Public Participation'. This illustrates the different levels of engagement, and explains the type of obligations those managing the participation process have towards the public (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Spectrum of Public Participation.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Partnership (or Collaborate)	Empower (or Control)
Public participation objective				
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Obligations to the public				
To keep the public informed	To keep the public informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	To ensure concerns and aspirations of the public are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	To look to the public for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate their advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	To implement what the public decide

Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation website.

Opportunities for public engagement in forestry

There are now many more opportunities for public engagement in forestry than there were a few years ago. These include:

- regular interaction with public agencies and institutions (e.g. Forestry Commission, local authorities) or third sector organisations such as trusts and charities that own forested land;
- taking part in projects and activities with these organisations and others, such as private sector owners and managers.

Public engagement is not just about decision-making, it is also the daily contact between forest users and managers that occurs as part of the delivery of public benefits and services. The types of engagement opportunities tend to fall into two major categories:

- **Delivering services** – this includes taking part in activities provided by woodland owners and managers (e.g. volunteering activities), and influencing the kind and amount of the services and facilities they provide so they are best suited to user needs.
- **Decision-making** – the governance of forests and woodlands, including the design of forest and woodland management systems, operational plans, strategic forest policy planning or engagement in decisions related to new infrastructure.

It is important to be clear which of these roles forms the basis for involving people in any given context. The objectives of engagement will be different, so the approaches and methods will also differ (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 The differing approaches and methods for the two main categories of engagement opportunities.

	Delivering services	Decision-making
Scale of operation	Often smaller scale	Often larger scale
Approach	Proactive: establishing and delivering stakeholder needs	Reactive: maintaining forestry operations and planning processes
Key ingredients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach: individuals, groups • Using local knowledge • Longer-term or continuous process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected representatives • Use of expert knowledge common and use of local knowledge less common • Often time bound and periodic • May be linked to formal processes
Style of public engagement	Consulting, involving and partnership	Informing and consulting

Adapted from Tabbush (2010).

Engagement in on-going activities and decision-making can be concerned with small-scale or larger-scale issues. For example, involvement in an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for a wind turbine project or new forest planting will be linked to decision-making concerned with large-scale landscape changes, whereas the involvement in on-going activities such as the design of mountain-bike trails in a forest park is likely to be a smaller-scale issue. However, the boundaries are not always clear cut. Large-scale negotiations about car rallies in forests may take place with representatives at national

level, but they will still concern the provision of services and facilities at specific sites. The important point is that different engagement approaches will be needed depending on objectives.

This toolbox offers principles and methods that support these different kinds of participation. The toolbox uses the following terms to differentiate between the different levels of public engagement in the planning and management of forest or woodland activities:

- **Information:** give people basic information so that they can decide if they wish to be a consultee on, or a participant in, the forest or woodland planning or delivery process. Letting people know what is happening is a very legitimate role, particularly in situations where stakeholders will not be invited to take part in decision-making.
- **Consultation:** invite people to express their interests, concerns and ideas for the forest or woodland management plan, service and facilities, or other forestry-related decision.
- **Involvement:** encourage people to participate in generating options and potential solutions for forest management plans, projects or activities (see Box 1 for the three broad types of public involvement).

Box 1 Types of public involvement.

1. Taking part in events that might be associated with specific processes such as a forest management plan. These activities might include Planning for Real exercises, group meetings, or viewing displays of different design and plan options.
2. Taking an active part in the decision-making and planning of a specific activity, event, service or facility.
3. Taking a practical and active part in the physical management of a forest or woodland site or activities in a woodland setting, such as volunteering to erect fences, clear brash or plant trees.

- **Partnership (Collaboration):** people directly participate in selecting the best-fit solution that will become the forest or woodland management plan, or in choosing and designing the activities and services provided. Influence and responsibilities are negotiated and shared.
- **Empowerment (Control):** this involves building the capacity of an individual or groups of people such as community groups, local authorities or private owners to manage woodland independently.

Figure 3 illustrates the range of opportunities for people to engage with forestry and the likely level of participation in each case.

Figure 3 Opportunities for public engagement in forestry.

	Inform	Consult	Involve			Partnership (Collaborate)	Empower (Control)	
			Taking part (e.g. events)	Helping plan	Helping manage		Lease	Ownership
Forest management plan	←→							
Health improvement activities e.g. health walks			←→					
Learning activities e.g. Forest School			←→					
Volunteering			←→					
Community woodland			←→					
Community-based business						←→		

Adapted from Forestry Commission Scotland website.

The pyramid of engagement

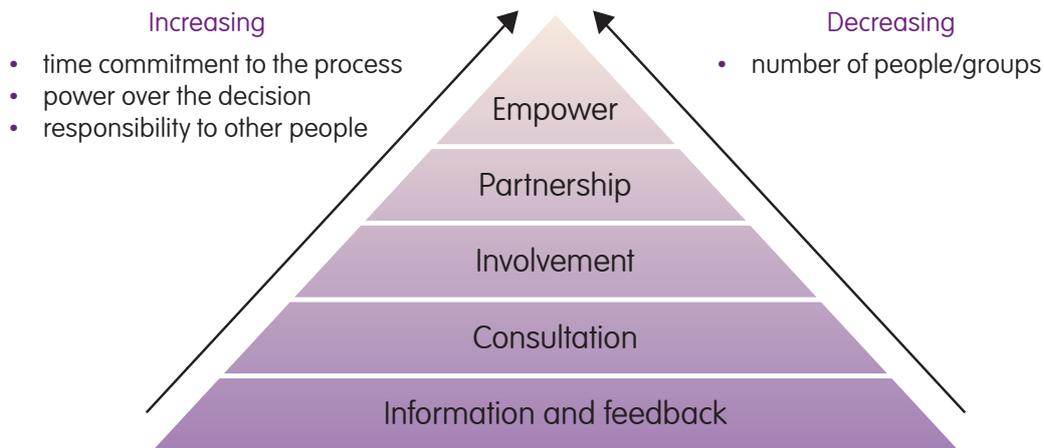
The pyramid in Figure 4 is a useful model to show the different levels of engagement, with the width of each tier representing the proportion of people who are likely to want to be involved at each stage. Each level of the pyramid also places different demands on the resources available to foresters (e.g. time, staff, budget allocations).

Initially, most people will want to have information about a forest planning process or opportunity to engage. They can then decide if and how they wish to be more actively involved in the process. Most people will also want feedback on the progress made. Fewer people will decide to get involved at the consultation or involvement levels, and fewer still will be prepared to commit their time and energy to working in partnership with the forest or woodland management team.

In other words, engagement is not about trying to involve all of the people all of the time, but thinking about who should or might be involved and when.

It is particularly important to think through and then develop ways that will ensure that anyone, from any group in society, can take part. As the process moves up the pyramid, the number of people involved tends to decline, while their influence tends to increase. Unless those people are representative of all, the full range of social needs, expectations and opinions are likely to be missed. This could be a fundamental issue in areas where communities are particularly diverse and where large numbers of people are likely to have an interest in the woodland or forest that is the focus of attention.

Figure 4 The pyramid of engagement.



A pyramid cannot be built from the top down

When a new community-focused project or initiative is launched, the best way to develop a dialogue and build a relationship with people is to start at ground level. Developing mutual trust, understanding and commitment to the project or decision-making process will encourage some to stay actively engaged as the process stages move up the pyramid. This approach takes time.

Empowerment and responsibility

The higher that people choose to 'climb' the pyramid, the more power they have over the forest or woodland decision-making process. They also have a responsibility to all those people on the lower tiers of the pyramid to:

- commit sufficient time to the process;
- prepare and manage an equitable participatory process;
- represent the interests of other people including those who might be less vocal or harder to reach;
- choose the best-fit solution that meets the needs of all people with an interest or likely to be affected, including those from minority groups;
- keep people informed on the progress of the process.

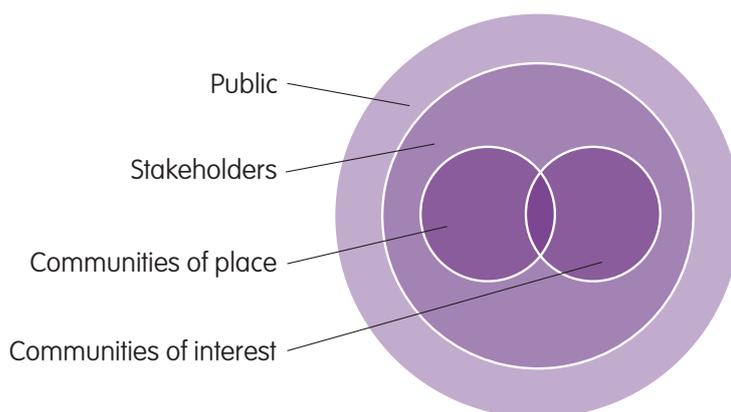
Who do we mean by 'public'?

The people we wish to involve are often referred to by one of the following terms, which are often used interchangeably, but do not mean the same thing.

- **Public:** the community or people in general.
- **Stakeholders:** those who have an interest in a particular decision, either as individuals or as representatives of a group. This includes people who influence a decision, or **can** influence it, as well as those affected by it.
- **Community:** all the people living in one area or a group of people with shared origins or interests.

These terms relate to each other as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5 Relationships between the public, stakeholders and communities.



When starting to consider who should be involved in the decision-making process, start with the big picture. It is easy – and wrong – to focus solely on the 'locals'. Other, vital, stakeholders might be missed and, while it is not practical to involve the entire public, it is still important to think about those people from minority groups, or who are traditionally under-represented, but who may still have an interest. It is also very important to consider people who are not currently users of forest resources and services, but who might form part of a target group or become forest users in the future.

Different categories of community (i.e. 'of place' and 'of interest') often overlap. People who share a community of place might still belong to different – and sometimes conflicting – communities of interest. For example, within a particular village (i.e. a community of place) the people with an interest in a local forest might include those who enjoy mountain-biking and those with an interest in horse-riding. These two different communities of interest may have different expectations about forest design or woodland management.

Box 2 Overlapping 'communities of place' and 'communities of interest'.

In some urban areas communities of interest can be more robust than communities of place. These communities of interest might be formed around shared interests or shared origins (e.g. leisure interests, ethnicity, age, religion, shared schools). Engaging with a community of interest may be the best way of finding people likely to have an interest in a woodland in a particular neighbourhood.

One neighbourhood is likely to include people who identify with other communities of interest (ethnicity, age, religion or ability). In some urban contexts communities of interest can be more robust than communities of place, so engaging the 'community of interest' can increase the numbers of people likely to take part in a woodland activity in one particular location.

The concept of the 'forest or woodland catchment' can help to unravel some of these complicated connections. Not only can 'communities of place' and 'communities of interest' overlap, a 'community of interest' is likely to include users and interest groups who travel from beyond the immediate area.

The 'public' and the 'community' will include a complex social and interest-based mix of people of different ages, gender, ability and religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. All abilities, needs and perspectives should be taken into consideration, as far as possible.

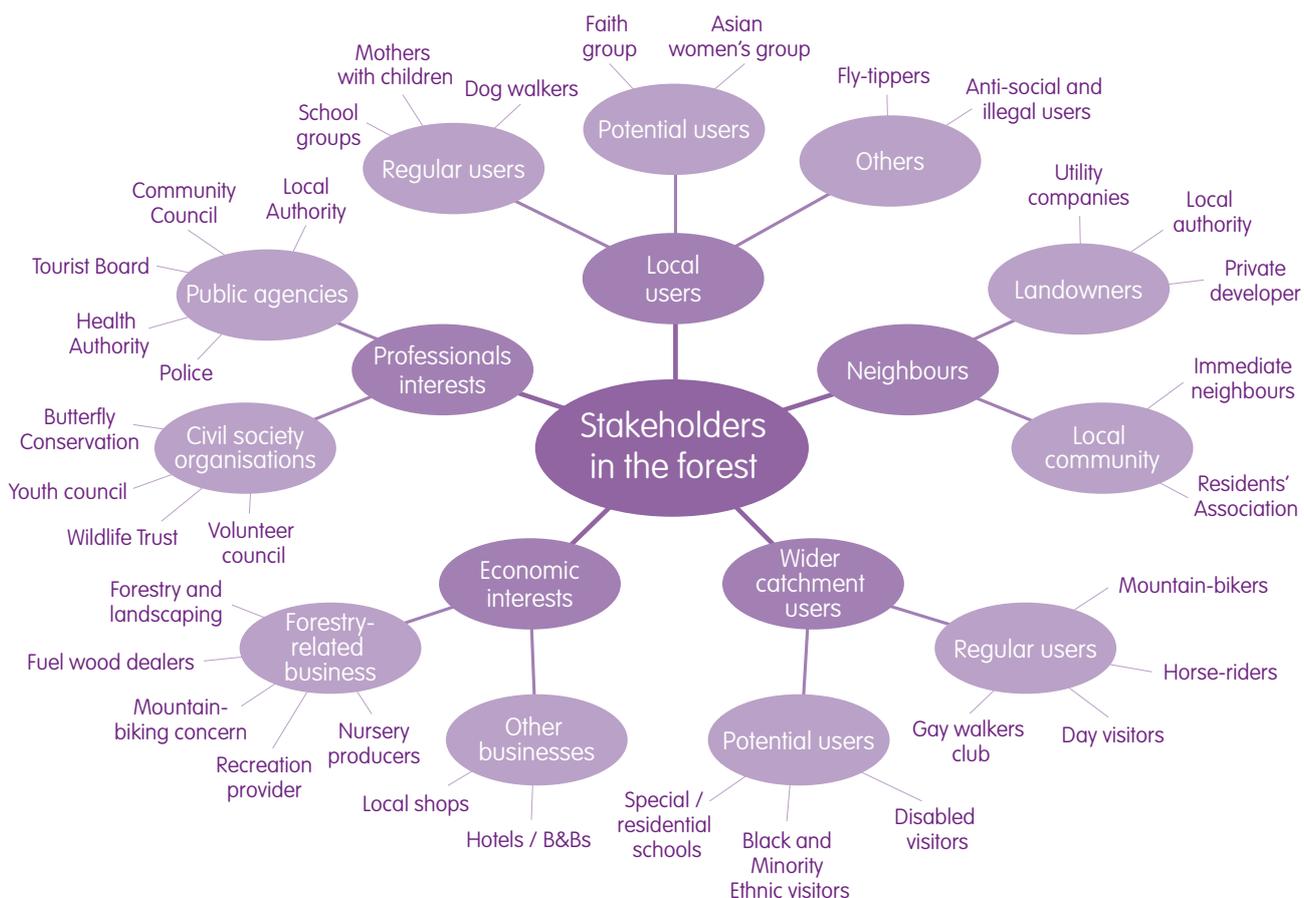
Box 3 Understanding local demographics and woodland catchments.

There is a very popular forest site in south-west England. The forest catchment is known to be about a two-hour drive from the site. This covers places like Birmingham, Oxford, Bristol and Gloucester. There are differences between the demographics of these urban areas, the demographic of the community surrounding the forest, and the actual or potential visitors who come from either. It is important for forest managers, particularly those from a public body, to consider the needs of all stakeholders from across the **catchment** and not just the stakeholders from the local **community**.

Identifying stakeholders

Individual foresters, rangers or office staff will often have a good idea of who has an interest in woodlands and forestry. Getting together in a group and sharing that knowledge is an important part of identifying the full range of stakeholders. Brainstorming with other agencies/organisations involved in similar activities, or those working in similar locations, is also a good way of identifying stakeholders. Using a mind-map (see Figure 6) can help people to think of stakeholders beyond the usual local community and the more obvious user groups.

Figure 6 An example of a stakeholder mind-map.



Building a mind-map proceeds by first identifying the major groups of users near to the centre of the diagram and then detailing these groups towards the outside of the picture. This helps to identify which segments of the public should be included, and appropriate ways of engaging each group of stakeholders. For example:

- Are there particular groups or affected parties that are particularly significant to achieving specific aims or objectives?
- Are there particular groups of people who are likely to find themselves in conflict with one another or present particular challenges to successfully achieving forestry and woodland management objectives?
- Is it possible to identify sub-groups that might be particularly important to connect with for ensuring that engagement is truly representative (e.g. disabled hikers, first-time day visitors, or immediate neighbours from a minority group)?

But there may still be significant gaps. It is important to take time to evaluate initial stakeholder lists, compare them against information about an area, and decide if more needs to be done to identify less well-known and less obvious stakeholders. Additional methods of identifying stakeholders include:

- Secondary data (e.g. historical records, correspondence files, local newspaper articles).
- Government statistics and data, such as census information, which provide information about a local area and its demographic characteristics that should be taken into account. More information on this is provided in Resources Section D at the end of this publication.

- Self-selection (i.e. promoting the engagement process to the public and encouraging those with an interest to make themselves known). This is likely to lead to narrow representation, with the most regular visitors to a forest, or the people most active in the community, most likely to turn up unless steps have been taken to reach the broadest range of people in the most appropriate manner.
- Snowballing (i.e. one stakeholder helps to identify another stakeholder). This is an effective way of establishing contacts with communities of interest and minority groups once an initial contact has been made.
- Using lists of organisations, charities and networks to find specific groups, organisations and agencies who represent particular sections of the community of place or communities of interest.
- Asking forums and consultative groups used by local government and other organisations (e.g. the police, local authorities, town councils, the fire brigade, job centres).

Considering and finding stakeholders appropriate to the engagement process is an important way of ensuring that decision-making processes and the facilities and services provided by woodland managers are suited to the widest group of users (Box 4).

Box 4 Public and private sector duties.

The Equality Act 2010 says all organisations must provide goods, facilities and services in a way that does not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of the following Protected Characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

Consultation and positive engagement with all sectors of society, particularly for minority and harder to reach groups, is best practice for all organisations and will assist in avoiding any form of discrimination and increase the numbers of people benefiting from the service in question.

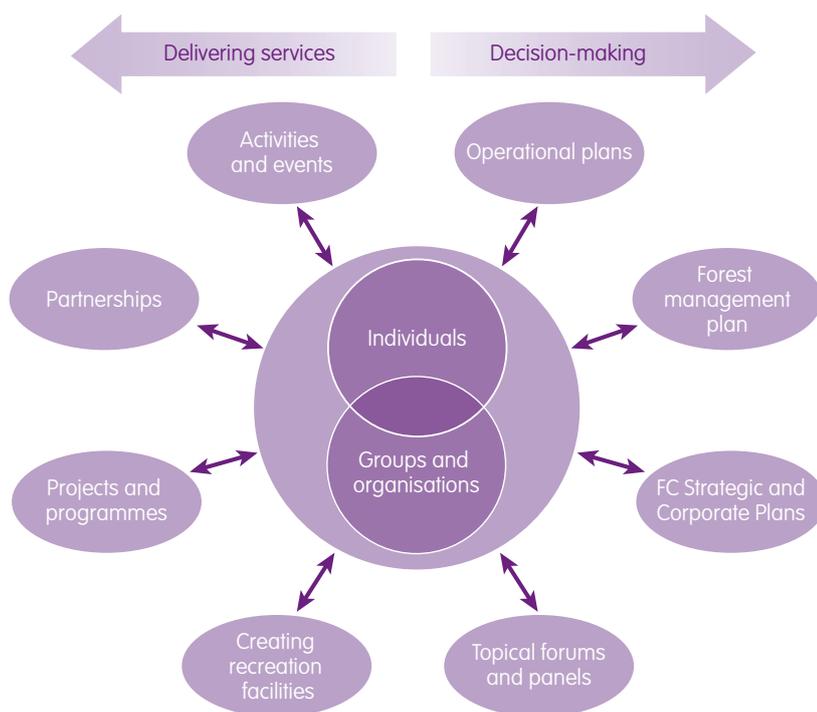
When and how should we involve people?

The point has already been made that how you engage with people will depend on what you are trying to achieve (e.g. are you dealing with a decision-making process, or interested in developing services and facilities, or getting people involved in events and activities?).

It is important that the most appropriate level of engagement is undertaken to match the intended objectives. For example, consultation is an appropriate form of engagement to use when there is a realistic expectation that the public's suggestions will be taken into account and at least some of the preferences expressed can be delivered. Too often consultation raises expectations and fails to deliver. This is not fair on the public or the forest manager. Defining **why** you want to engage people should lead the forest manager to identify the best engagement approach.

Figure 7 illustrates examples of different types of forestry activities and where engagement might take place. Whatever form the engagement takes, some flexibility will be required, as people will often take the opportunity to raise concerns that are not seen as immediately relevant. For example, people might focus on the problem of dog mess on paths or timber lorries passing the local school during a process that is focused on informing people about operational plans. Capture these concerns and identify a way of responding to them in future – this will help build relationships.

Figure 7 Public engagement in different areas of forest and woodland planning, operations and activities.



Key principles to guide decisions about when and how to engage people

Principles to bear in mind when working through who should be engaged and when are:

- Discuss, make clear and agree the objectives for public engagement and make sure everyone understands who to involve and when.
- Engage with individuals and communities as early as possible to ensure you build support rather than resentment or conflict. Early communication is essential in identifying who might be involved and in what capacity.
- Design the 'when', 'who' and 'how' of public engagement to suit the context of your process.
- Ensure the time, location, materials and delivery methods are suitable for the greatest engagement and understanding for the group(s) you are involving.
- Don't be afraid to try new techniques and methods to fit the particular needs of the situation and local population.
- Communicate and listen. It will help to clarify the key people, groups and communities that you need to speak to.
- Avoid consultation and engagement overload!
- Set realistic and achievable goals and don't over-reach – work to the resources you have.
- Don't raise expectations. Consult on what you can deliver and make it clear what the limitations are.

Methods to engage different groups of people

We have a pretty good idea of which of the methods of engagement are likely to work better for different kinds of people. Some general pointers include:

- Use verbal rather than written methods if working with people who use English or Welsh as a second or third language, or who may not have a high degree of literacy.
- Use less formal methods with people who are not used to being consulted or who might be wary of formal 'government' processes.
- When dealing with non-experts, avoid using complex and abstract ideas. A field visit is more effective than a photograph. A photograph is more effective than a map. Stock-maps or other technical materials may be hard to understand and this creates a barrier to engagement.
- Organise 'safe spaces' for discussion – consider the location, the type of venue, context and atmosphere.
- Think about using theatre, music and creative methods for exploring ideas and reminiscences with younger and older people.
- Hold a number of meetings at different, easy-to-reach venues and at different times to give as many people as possible the chance to take part. Try to find 'neutral' venues.
- Don't assume that everyone has access to the internet and e-mail. If you want to use IT to reach younger people, be creative.
- Where possible use meetings to consult people on more than one issue rather than going to the same group a number of different times for similar issues.

More information on this can be found in Resources Section A on diversity and equality at the end of this publication.

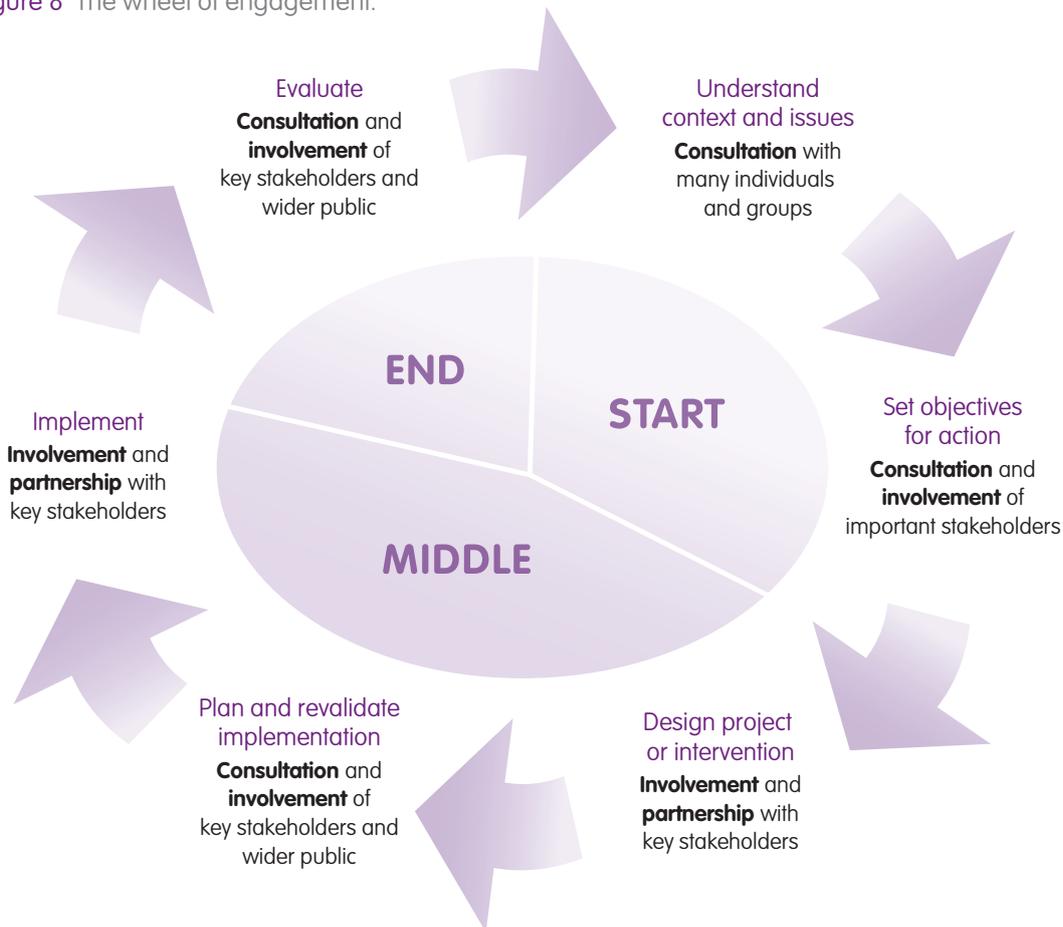
Using different forms of engagement at different stages in a process

Do not forget that there are different types of engagement (Figure 1). There is no reason for the style and level of engagement to be the same throughout a specific process, activity or project. Not all stakeholders need to be involved in the same way all the time. For example, in the case of designing a new urban woodland, it may be appropriate for the early design stages to use **consultation** as a way to engage many people in developing proposals, but for the detailed design stage to use **involvement** to engage a smaller number of stakeholders.

Break down a process by thinking about a beginning, middle and end. One way of portraying this is as a 'wheel of inclusion', with different forms of engagement used at different stages (Figure 8). The image of a wheel reminds us that engagement processes can persist over time, and endings often lead on to new beginnings:

- Beginning – scope issues, identify stakeholders, define objectives, make plans.
- Middle – discuss design options, make decisions, implement actions.
- End – consider how things will carry on into the future, agree plans for future involvement, bring an event to closure, formally hand ownership or responsibilities to particular parties, celebrate achievements, evaluate processes and results.

Figure 8 The wheel of engagement.



Strong foundations: the start of a process

Remember that beginnings lay the groundwork. First impressions count! If you want to successfully engage with different groups of people, use appropriate approaches and methods:

- Contact different stakeholder groups through trusted organisations or community leaders to ensure you have representation of all key stakeholders.
- Do not assume people understand the nature of your organisation, what you are trying to achieve through engagement or the benefits that woodlands can bring to them.
- Use techniques that begin to build trust and dialogue.
- Ensure enough time is allocated to allow relationships to build and develop.

Stakeholders, issues and their resolution

What is really important is defining the most crucial stakeholders and the issues they are likely to be concerned with. Issues can be described as 'tame' and easy-to-resolve or more complicated and 'difficult' problems.

Tame problems may be:

- Easy to resolve (e.g. a finger-post needs a simple repair).
- A simple issue with resource implications that makes it more difficult to resolve (e.g. several miles of footpath need repair and annual maintenance. Possible resolutions might include voluntary help, involving people by getting them to provide information that will help with repair and maintenance, or empowering a group to take control of the necessary operations).
- A relatively simple issue demanding a solution that takes into account other stakeholder interests (e.g. a proposed route for a new footpath passes through a National Nature Reserve (NNR)).

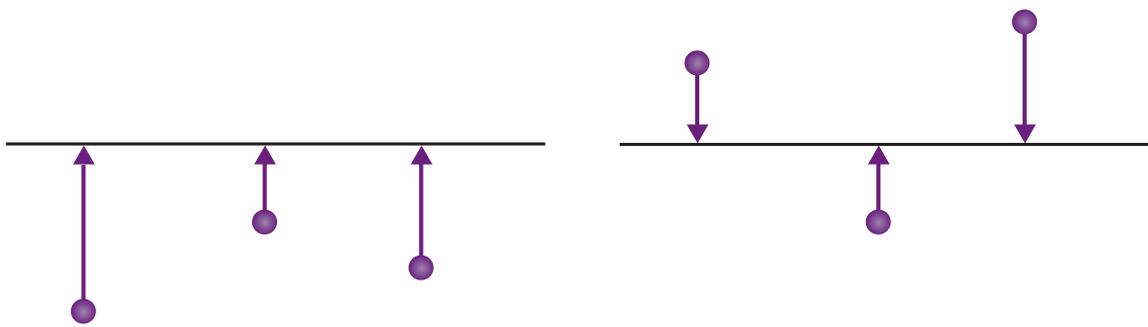
Difficult problems may be:

- Issues where the underlying problem(s) is not fully understood, and it is not possible to write a specification for a successful solution (e.g. a proposal to introduce new woodland into a cherished landscape meets with instant opposition from people with strong emotional attachments to the area).

Finding ways of understanding issues and accommodating stakeholder interests and perspectives is often crucial to the success of woodland projects. The forest or woodland manager needs to distinguish the issues relevant to the most important stakeholders, decide which of these relate to the design of the engagement process, and which of these can be tackled as part of the woodland management. Difficult issues may require the help of external facilitators who can act as independent arbiters. Some issues may need to be tackled by other agencies rather than foresters.

Consensus building is an important form of stakeholder negotiation that aims to build dialogue between stakeholders so that issues can be discussed and ways forward agreed. Looking for consensus among stakeholders about the issues linked to woodland management involves finding mutual gains for all parties (i.e. win-win situations) with the minimum of compromise and trade-off. Figure 9 illustrates the difference between consensus and compromise and Box 5 provides some examples.

Figure 9 Negotiating consensus and compromise.



Consensus

Win–win situations occur as all parties agree to reach a position where they feel something has been gained.

Compromise

Trade-offs are made as positions shift, with some feeling they have gained and others feeling they have given up something for the greater good.

Box 5 Consensus and compromise in stakeholder negotiation and woodland management.

For example, a woodland National Nature Reserve (NNR) is located close to an urban area. There is demand for increased access from users. Managers of the NNR wish to protect woodland quality. Stakeholders must work to negotiate a solution:

- **Consensus** among stakeholders could lead to a win–win solution where stakeholders agree that improved (but controlled) access to the NNR is no bad thing. The Footpaths Committee agrees to put up signs, build and maintain a path, and co-operate in controlling access. Everyone wins.
- **Compromise** among stakeholders could lead to trade-offs where an existing poorer quality path across an important NNR elsewhere is given up in return for limited access to this NNR. Everyone compromises.

Towards the end of a process

The public have a particularly important role to play in planning for sustainability and evaluating impact. Continued support, care and respect for individuals, community groups and organisations can build confidence and the potential for real involvement and engagement over a number of years, rather than just for a single initiative. The care offered by forest managers to all groups during and after any initiatives will dictate how likely the groups are to take part in future initiatives, or become regular forest visitors or service users. This is particularly true in the case of newly engaged and harder to reach minority groups.

Monitoring and evaluation – start, middle and end

Monitoring is about recording and measuring events, activities and changes to people and places brought about as a result of an action or intervention. Evaluation should identify and assess the

impacts of those changes and assess the strengths and weaknesses of an overall process, or any of the steps along the way. The reason for doing this is to learn lessons from the process and improve the approaches and techniques used, and to inform colleagues.

Effective monitoring and evaluation should be planned as part of the process from the beginning. Mechanisms – such as attendance forms, feedback forms or evaluation discussions – should help you to make improvements to the process as you carry it through. This is especially useful when first engaging difficult-to-reach or newly contacted people in densely populated urban areas and can help you figure out what is not working and why.

Monitoring and evaluation at event and overall process level is concerned with understanding:

- achievements and impacts;
- who was included, and who was missed out or excluded and why this happened;
- people's perceptions about how well they were included and how effective it was;
- if the public's views and preferences expressed were actually acted upon, and if not, why not;
- what was learnt and who shared what was learnt;
- the strengths and weaknesses of the process – and what to do differently next time.

Box 6 Involving stakeholders in an evaluation of impact at the end of a project.

The Active England programme aimed to increase community participation in sport and physical activity across England. Five projects (Bedgebury, Rosliston, Haldon, Greenwood and Great Western Community Forests) were conducted in partnership with the Forestry Commission and each was monitored and evaluated by an external team of researchers. The monitoring and evaluation was a consultative form of involvement and the results showed positive impacts on self-reported levels of health and well-being in people brought into using woodlands by Active England activities; the results also showed an increase in the number of forest visitors from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds.

For more information see www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox

There is a requirement under the Equality Act 2010 for public bodies to monitor the impact of events, activities and changes on people who belong to groups with Protected Characteristics.

Planning for public engagement

Success depends on planning. Background work (holding meetings and discussing issues) is never a waste of time – it forms the foundations of your project. This early planning is all the more important when engaging with large urban populations where the social context is complex.

The key stages in planning are:

1. Set objectives.
2. Lay the groundwork.
3. Design the engagement.
4. Prepare a working plan and budget.
5. Implementation.
6. Bring the process to an end.

See the [Engagement planning framework](#) document.

There will also be various points during this process where managers should plan to monitor and review the success or otherwise of an initiative.

Setting objectives

This is the most important task. Do your project objectives fit with policy objectives and link with those for local urban greenspace, regeneration, planning policy and social priorities? Agree the objectives with staff leading an initiative, with other partners and organisations and, if appropriate, with stakeholders. Establish why you need to involve the public and what you hope to achieve. Plan for sustainability and for contingencies – anticipate possible problems and keep the long-term objectives in view.

Laying the groundwork

Get to know more about an area and the context in which woodland and forest managers will be working. Don't skimp on this even if the area is small and one you think you know – social situations, stakeholders, issues and local politics change all the time. In urban areas, large and mixed populations, a range of interests and areas of conflict make this stage all the more important. Consider the following:

- **What is the extent of the area you need to consult within?**
Consider the immediate locality and the catchment area of visitors and potential visitors.
- **What is the history of the area?**
Knowing about the economic and social history of a place helps you understand why people might be attached or connected with local landscapes.

- **Who lives in the area? Who are the stakeholders?**

Check census records and other data provided through the UK Office of National Statistics or Scotland's Census Results OnLine. Demographic information will give you an idea of the range of people and communities of interest that you'll need to involve.

- **Who represents different social groups?**

Contact the groups, organisations and networks that represent relevant stakeholders.

- **Are there potential conflicts?**

Understanding the community make-up will also help to identify any potential conflicts that might arise between groups of people who might be involved in planned activities. For example, an urban regeneration site in the north-west of England became a no-man's land for the public because it established a new and easy route between gang territories.

- **How best should stakeholders be contacted?**

The contacts made and information collected identifying stakeholders should provide ideas on how best to do this. Available resources will affect the strategies you can use and will set limits for the scope of stakeholder inclusion.

- **What other projects or organisations are active in the local area?**

Identify other organisations, networks and associations doing similar work (e.g. local access officers, Greenspace projects, local authority services). Find out what they are doing and if they can help you reach your target communities.

During the information-gathering stage be clear about why the information is being collected and what the objectives of potential activities are. Manage expectations from the beginning.

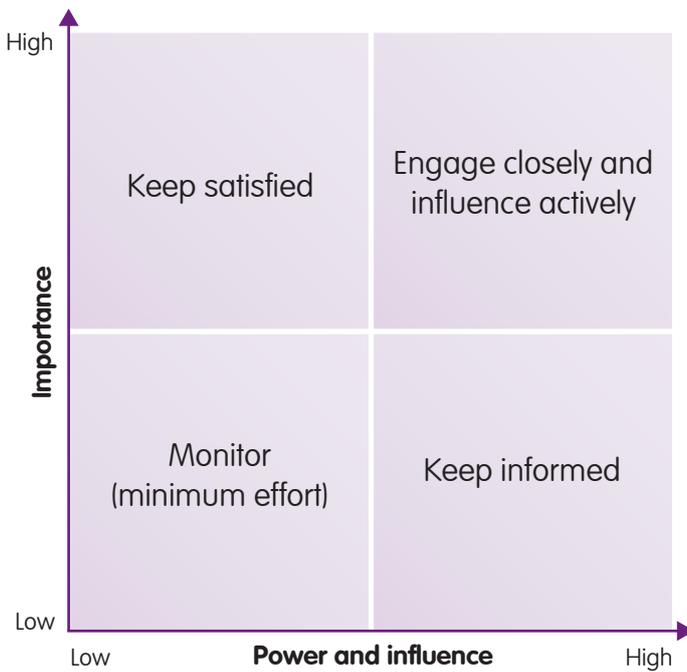
Designing the engagement

Start by thinking through:

- the key stakeholders to involve;
- the ways in which stakeholders may best be involved in the process, and the needs of different segments of society;
- how might this change as their level of engagement changes;
- what demand this may put on your resources.

Not all stakeholders will be equally important to the engagement process or the issues involved in a woodland or forestry project and actions. Stakeholder analysis takes the stakeholder mind-map one stage further by providing a framework to sort through which stakeholders are most important. Although there are a number of different techniques for doing this, Figure 10 illustrates a common way of grouping stakeholders and identifying what kind of actions to take. In this example, stakeholders are classified according to their importance and their power and influence. Stakeholder 'importance' means their importance to achieving the agreed objectives of the engagement process and woodland management issues (i.e. are they people or target groups foresters are aiming to benefit?). Stakeholder 'power and influence' means the power and influence people and organisations have to either support or disrupt the engagement process and the woodland management objectives.

Figure 10 Example of a matrix to prioritise engagement actions with stakeholders.



A simple public engagement planning chart can help you think through when best to include the different groups of stakeholders. Transfer each of the stakeholder groups identified in the brainstorming session and the analysis into the chart (Figure 11) to decide who should be involved, in what way, and at what stage in the process. Then consider the best way to communicate with each stakeholder at each stage (Figure 12).

Figure 11 Identifying how to include stakeholder groups using a planning chart.

Type of engagement	Stage in process				
	Set objectives	Design	Plan	Implement	Evaluate
Inform					
Consult	<i>Important stakeholders</i>		<i>Key stakeholders Wider public</i>		<i>Key stakeholders Wider public</i>
Involve	<i>Important stakeholders</i>	<i>Key stakeholders</i>	<i>Key stakeholders Wider public</i>	<i>Key stakeholders</i>	<i>Key stakeholders Wider public</i>
Partnership		<i>Key stakeholders</i>		<i>Key stakeholders</i>	
Empower					

Figure 12 Identifying the best tools and techniques to include people – a partially completed example.

	Inform			Consult			Involve	
	Targeted letters	Website info	Posters	Focus groups	Forest for Real	Participatory appraisal	Citizens' Jury	Forest Forum
School groups	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Dog walkers			✓		✓		✓	✓
Mothers with children			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Asian women's group	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Faith group	✓		✓		✓			
Fly-tippers								
Anti-social users						✓		

The toolsheets in the toolbox provide information on the range of tools and techniques available, their particular strengths and weaknesses, and the resources required to use them. Adding this level of detail will give you an idea of the duration, intensity and resource requirement of the engagement design process. Consider a few options and assess them for feasibility and practicality.

Some of the detailed issues that may affect design and resource requirements are:

- The venue – What is its availability, accessibility and cost? Does it have any religious associations that might preclude some groups from taking part? Might a venue display literature or advertising that could offend some groups?
- Timing – Will weekend and evening work be required to fit in with community and stakeholder availability? Have you taken religious holidays and other important festivals into account? Have you considered how these could affect timings?
- Methods of recruitment – Telephone, posters, advertising campaign, door-to-door leaflet drop, help from other organisations and agencies?
- Mix of participants – Are you going to deal with communities and stakeholders that might require men and women to be involved as single-gender groups? Will older and younger people need different opportunities for engagement?
- What additional materials might be needed? Facilitators, translations and translators?
- How will you let participants know what happened or what was decided?
- Have you accounted for a monitoring and evaluation system?

Preparing a working plan and budget

Once the design has been developed and agreed it needs to be translated into an action plan, with a worked budget, for a final check and agreement with the relevant stakeholders.

Implementation

This involves putting into action the methods, techniques and actions included in the overall plan and speaking to people. Be positive and flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. A suitable lead-in time will be required to get meetings and other kinds of actions organised. The implementation should also include opportunities for monitoring and evaluating the processes and impacts.

Bringing the process to an end

Once all of the engagement and engagement events have taken place and the results have been assessed, celebrate achievements and inform people about what happens next. Evaluate the process, share experiences and learn more about what worked well, and what could be improved next time. Good engagement should be sustainable, and because groups will need to be used more than once, there is ideally no such thing as closure – just a lull between one engagement and the next.

How to use this toolbox

This toolbox has been designed for use both electronically and for readers to print out to form a loose-leaf book.

The right tool for the job

The toolbox provides information on a wide variety of public engagement tools and their strengths and weaknesses. They are organised in the toolsheets contents page under the four levels of participation that concern the forest or woodland manager when developing plans.

When considering the appropriate tool for the level of engagement, think about:

- What do people want from us and what do we want from them?
- What information do people need first so that they can give us the information we want?
- What are the social, cultural, economic and geographic characteristics of the stakeholder group or individual and how might these affect the methods and location we choose?
- Will it reach the right people?
- Is it convenient for engagement?

The toolsheets

The toolsheets are not definitive but represent a summary of different tools gathered from a range of published sources in print and on the internet. (Sometimes the tools are known by other names – we have included these alternatives, where appropriate.)

The tools and techniques evolve as they are used and adapted by people to meet their individual needs, so some tools listed are closely 'related' to others.

Try out a few of the tools – especially those that are new to you – and adapt and change the ideas they contain to meet your needs. Let us know what works well for you – it could work equally well for others.

Your feedback on the toolbox

The toolbox is intended to give you practical assistance. It is important that you let us know about any problems encountered in using it, or ideas you may have, so that we can improve our future guidance. Please let us know about:

- tools which you may be using, or have heard of, that are not included here;
- links contained in the toolbox that do not work;
- sources of useful information that we have not included.

Please send your comments to:

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Resources

A. Diversity and equality resources

Examples of good practice engagement methods from an equality perspective can be found from the following links:

General advice on working with equality groups

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission, as well as giving general advice about Equalities legislation, has produced an accessible guide about best practice community engagement from a diversity and equalities perspective. This includes planning issues, appropriate methods and logistics: www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/good_practice_in_community_engagement.pdf
- The Government Equalities Office explains more about the Equality Act 2010 and provides factsheets and other publications that suggest how to take account of diversity issues in your work: www.equalities.gov.uk

Older people

Age UK (www.ageuk.org.uk) – formerly Help the Aged and Age Concern, is a national charity dealing with older people's issues. It has produced a short factsheet with key points to consider when consulting with and engaging older people:

www.ageuk.org.uk/documents/en-gb/for-professionals/participation-and-involvement/id6980_consulting_and_engaging_with_older_people_dos_and_dons_2007_pro.pdf?dtrk=true

Young people

There are many charities and services that provide advice on working with younger people. Two useful resources are:

- A manual including methods for engaging young people, produced jointly by Connexions and Unite Participation, a project of East Sussex Council: <https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/supportingchildren/youth/youthparticipation/toolkits/Documents/zone%20Essentials%20Participation.pdf>
- A manual produced by Save the Children (an international children's charity) that aims to support young people improving their community: www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/docs/diy-toolkit.pdf

Engaging people from different faith groups

- The Chartered Institute of Housing is the professional body for people involved in housing and communities. It has produced a manual that explains Muslim culture and lists key issues to consider when engaging people from Muslim communities: www.cih.org/publications/downloads/pub700.pdf
- The Interfaith Network for the UK (www.interfaith.org.uk), the Scottish Interfaith Council (www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org) and the Wales Interfaith Council (www.interfaithwales.org) all provide general resources on faith, belief and religion.

People from ethnic minorities

Focused on work with Black and Ethnic Minority communities in South Yorkshire, a handbook produced by Sheffield Hallam University provides information about approaches and methods applicable to

forest managers working in other areas of the UK:

www.ukeconet.co.uk/images/stories/news/Maxwell_Handbook_Vol1.pdf

People with disabilities

Consulting Disabled People, Resource Disability Portfolio Guide 11, is a manual available on the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council website. The booklet covers the principles of consultation, who to approach and the best methods of inclusion:

www.mla.gov.uk/what/support/toolkits/libraries_disability/~media/Files/pdf/2003/dis_guide11.ashx

B. Engagement handbooks and manuals

These manuals provide information about public engagement principles, planning frameworks and more detailed descriptions of the methods and tools for engaging people.

A guide for project M&E (2004). International Fund for Agricultural Development, Rome.

www.ifad.org/evaluation/guide/index.htm

Beyond fences: seeking social sustainability in conservation (1997). IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

www.iucn.org/themes/spg/beyond_fences/beyond_fences.html#contents

Book 1: An introduction to engagement, Book 2: The engagement planning workbook and Book 3: The engagement toolkit (2005). Victorian Government Department of Sustainability and Environment, Melbourne. www.dse.vic.gov.au/effective-engagement

Building citizen-based electronic democracy efforts (1997). www.publicus.net/articles/build.html

Community planning handbook (2000). Earthscan Publications, London.

Cultural values of trees woods and forests (2010). Forest Research, Farnham.

[www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Cultural_value_woods_full_report_March2010.pdf/\\$FILE/Cultural_value_woods_full_report_March2010.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/Cultural_value_woods_full_report_March2010.pdf/$FILE/Cultural_value_woods_full_report_March2010.pdf)

Effective public engagement: a guide for policy-makers and communications professionals (2009). The Cabinet Office, Westminster, London.

www.coi.gov.uk/documents/guidance/effective-public-engagement.pdf

Good practice guidance on consultation (2002). Scottish Executive, Edinburgh.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/1066/0006061.pdf

Good practice guide to public engagement in development schemes (2010). Royal Town Planning Institute, London. www.rtpi.org.uk/planningaid

Good practice in rural development, No. 1, Effective partnership working (1997). Scottish National Rural Partnership, The Scottish Office Central Research Unit, Edinburgh.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1997/01/10593/File-1

Good practice in rural development, No. 5, Consensus building (1997). Scottish National Rural Partnership, The Scottish Office, Edinburgh.

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1997/01/10598/File-1

Participation works! 21 techniques of community participation for the 21st century (1998). CD-ROM edition 1999. New Economics Foundation, London.

www.neweconomics.org/publications/participation-works

Participatory impact assessment: a guide for practitioners (2008). Friedman International Centre, Tufts University, Medford, MA.

<https://wikis.uit.tufts.edu/confluence/display/FIC/Participatory+Impact+Assessment>

Participatory learning and action: a trainer's guide (1995). International Institute for Environment and Development, London. www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=6021IIED&n=1&l=1&k=Participatory%20Learning%20and%20Action%20A%20trainer's%20guide

Participatory methods toolkit, a practitioner's manual (2003). viWTA and King Baudouin Foundation, Belgium. www.samenlevingentechnologie.be/ists/nl/pdf/boekengidsenbrochures/toolkitengdef.pdf

Public involvement in environmental permits: a reference guide (2000). US Environment Protection Agency, Washington, DC. www.epa.gov/epawaste/hazard/tsd/permit/epmt/publicguide.pdf

Public participation in environmental decisions: an evaluation framework using social goals (1998). Resources for the Future, Washington, DC. www.rff.org/documents/RFF-DP-99-06.pdf

Skills in Neighbourhood Work (2001). Routledge, London.

Successful neighbourhoods: a good practice guide (2007). Chartered Institute of Housing and The Housing Corporation, London.

The community's toolbox: the idea, methods and tools for participatory assessment, monitoring and evaluation in community forestry (1999). FAO, Rome.

www.fao.org/docrep/X5307E/X5307E00.htm#Contents

The guide to effective participation (1994). Partnerships Books, London.

www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/index.htm

The participation toolkit: supporting patient focus and public involvement in NHS Scotland (2010).

The Scottish Health Council, Edinburgh. www.scottishhealthcouncil.org/patient__public_participation/participation_toolkit/the_participation_toolkit.aspx

C. Websites with engagement resources

Community Planning: www.communityplanning.net/methods/methods.php

A site with a large database of methods and techniques.

Electronic Democracy resource site: doctordemocracy.net/resources.htm

A useful site for those looking to include internet and e-based methods of public engagement.

Idea: www.idea.gov.uk

The Local Government Improvement and Development site with information, online communities, case studies and a database of methods supporting engagement and community development.

Institute for Public Policy Research: www.ippr.org.uk

A research institute with useful policy and research documents describing and discussing participation and engagement.

International Association for Public Participation: www.iap2.org

Principles and practice of participation are explained, and the site includes a database of tools and techniques as well as training resources and case study resources. See also www.iap2.org/associations/4748/files/iap2%20spectrum_vertical.pdf for iap2 spectrum of public participation.

Involve: www.involve.org.uk

This site covers all aspects of participation and engagement in the UK, including tools, methods and guidance.

Learning for Sustainability: <http://learningforsustainability.net>

Formerly known as NRM Changelinks, this is a gateway accessing a huge number of resources relating to all areas of participation, engagement, monitoring and evaluation, action research and partnership project planning aimed specifically at natural resource managers.

Making the Net Work: www.makingthenetwork.org/index.htm

A useful resource for those considering use of the net in their engagement strategy. There is a database of tools and methods.

National Empowerment Partnership: <http://evcwm.org.uk/about/national-empowerment-partnership>

Funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the site contains advice and case studies, and links to tools and methods for engaging with equalities groups.

New Economics Foundation: www.neweconomics.org

nef is an independent 'think-and-do tank' that aspires to demonstrate real ways to economic wellbeing. It has 'Well-being' and 'Democracy and Participation' programmes that provide useful reports and methods manuals.

Open Space World: www.openspaceworld.org/english/index.html

A portal for the Open Space engagement framework. It includes information, case studies, guidance, tools and methods.

Partnerships Online: www.partnerships.org.uk

Funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Partnerships Online provides guides to building and managing partnerships, including practice and principles of participation, tools and methods.

People and Participation Net:

www.peopleandparticipation.net/display/participationlibrary/recommended+practical+guides
site providing detailed information on methods, planning engagement processes, case studies and research reports covering all aspects of public engagement. also includes blogs and comments from practitioners.

Public Dialogue: www.sciencewise-erc.org.uk/cms/what-is-dialogue-4

Run by Sciencewise-ERC, this site aims to promote interaction and dialogue between the public and other agencies involved in science and development. The site includes tools and methods, case studies, new items and other engagement resources.

Scottish Community Development Centre: www.scdc.org.uk

The site provides information about the National Standards, case studies, manuals, reports, and descriptions of tools and methods.

Scottish Participatory Initiatives (SPI): www.srds.co.uk/spi

Information on approaches and detailed descriptions of tools and methods are provided on this site.

The Evaluation Trust: www.evaluationtrust.org

A community development agency supporting project evaluation and organisational learning. the site includes a database of methods and tools for engagement and evaluation.

URP Toolbox: <https://app.secure.griffith.edu.au/03/toolbox/index.php>

Produced by the Urban Research Program (URP) of Griffith University, Australia, this site is a toolbox for evaluating community engagement and provides guidance, tools and methods for the evaluation of public engagement activities.

D. Demographic information

Joseph Rowntree Foundation: www.jrf.org.uk

The JRF undertakes research and community development projects. It hosts the poverty site (www.poverty.org.uk). this site provides data and an interactive mapping tool that gives summaries covering all aspects of poverty and deprivation, from income and work to health and education. The site covers all of the UK.

Neighbourhood Statistics: www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination

This is a service provided by the Office of National Statistics, covering England and Wales, and providing local-level demographic information. An interactive database with demographic data is generated at ward and local authority level using postcodes.

Office of National Statistics: www.ons.gov.uk

The ONS provides data on economy, population and society at national and local levels, including summaries and detailed data releases.

Scotland's Census Results Online: www.scrol.gov.uk/scrol/common/home.jsp

This provides access to Scotland's census data through thematic maps and interactive mapping tools, generating maps and tables at ward and local government level.

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/wimd/?lang=en>

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the official measure of deprivation in small areas in Wales. It is a relative measure of concentrations of deprivation at the small area level. The site provides summary information and reports and an interactive database that can generate information at ward level.

All website addresses given above were live as of March 2011.

Public engagement has become an important part of the work of foresters and land managers in recent years. This toolbox aims to provide information and ideas to forest and woodland managers on ways to engage individuals, communities and organisations in the decision-making, design and management of forestry projects and activities. There is no single right way in which to involve people in planning decisions; people and their needs vary from place to place and, in addition, every forest and woodland is unique and capable of delivering a range of benefits to people to a greater or lesser extent. The toolbox helps users identify for themselves whom to involve, which tools to use, when to use the tools, and what resources will be needed.



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